

Magazine Feature Section

A NEW RACE OF WOMEN

Shackled to Labor of Hardest Kind by War

Europe's Future Mothers Will Be Stronger and It Is Predicted by Scientists that Their Ascendancy Over Man Has Begun.

THE conjecture as to what the future will bring, what the eventual settlement of the present war will give to the world is nowhere more uncertain than in the field of labor and the apportionment of the tasks of production.

And the particular uncertainty regarding the position of women in industry and the relation of women to the labor market is undoubtedly the greatest and the gravest phase of the future's return to normal conditions.

The men had gone to the war. The work must be done; and the women were the only ones left to do it. Into the factories, the fields, the ships and the mines the women have gone to fill the places made vacant by the armies marching to battle. The new situation created an abnormal demand for workers, and it was met by abnormal measures.

With women engaged in every form of labor which men have heretofore done for the world, women have acquired both skill and strength. Skilled labor does not always have to be strong labor. But women have proved that they can supply strong labor as well as that requiring dexterous fingers rather than burly muscles.

Certain it is that women have acquired new characteristics. Scientists predict that the future will disclose a new generation of women, gifted with hard, supple muscles and blessed with the endurance of the male. Indeed, it is not the least improbable of the many half-hazard, half-deduction visions that men of science are beholding of the new world which will rise out of the great European struggle.

The inexorable law of the repetition of history cannot serve as a guide in this case. Never before were the conditions the same; never were the effects of a general war so far reaching; and never were the years to follow so much of an impossible mystery. Because of the entirely different conditions, absolutely no precedent exists upon which to make an affirmation which cannot be questioned. History may repeat itself, but it can scarcely be charged with ever before having presented so great a climax to the world.

Wars in Former Times.

AFTER Europe was swept by the religious passions of the Thirty Years War, and Germany was laid in ruins by its ebb and flow, the readjustment of peace came easily and surely. Louis XIV's domination of the Continent and his terrible War of the Spanish Succession were soon blotted out by the passage of a few years, and the world was again normal.

Frederick the Great and Napoleon, too, threw Europe into the caldron of war, and because the ingredients in every case were the same the final result of the turmoil were identical—quick return to the normal, domestic, isolated system of manufacture and commerce.

But now it is different. The intensely delicate and extensive machine of modern commerce has been destroyed. Industry has been upset. World intercourse, which did not before exist on even relatively as important a plane, has been thrown out of gear. Such vastly different conditions that the present conflict has upset certainly are bound to produce differences in result just as vast.

The skill and the newly acquired strength of women, who have been engaged in men's work now for more than two years, is not going to be easily cast aside. The future must see whether women will continue at their tasks in the factories and the mines and become a potent and a very vital factor in the competition of the labor market. It must decide whether the return of the warriors will also bring the return of the normal manufacturing system, or whether the men will return to compete with women in production.

With regard to women in industry, there are, briefly speaking, three theories of what might occur after the war.

One was largely propounded by the late Prof. Harry Thurston Peck, one of the leading opponents of woman suffrage during his lifetime. He took the view that whenever the domination of the male in lines of industry was threatened by women, scenes of disorder would arise which would set back the development of women to such an extent that they could not recover for centuries. His idea was that the brute force would finally tell, that, if men found themselves crowded out of work by women, they would return to their primitive instincts and would resume by violence what they considered their natural right.

Proven Themselves Capable.

AS a contrast to this theory comes the assertion that women have proven themselves amply capable of holding the positions, even at heavy labor, that men occupied prior to the present war in Europe. This also savors of the element of brute force, for it practically says that, if women are capable of doing men's work, they certainly will be capable of resisting the forcible attempts of men to regain their former pursuits. Both these ideas embody the survival of the fittest.

The third theory, which seems the most likely to work itself out under present conditions of society, is the theory of adjustment. That the sexes perform the tasks for which they are best suited, is the primal need of society. This theory holds that, with the return of normal conditions, a readjustment will succeed and

that rather than a struggle between the sexes a sort of adaptation will evolve and that the result will be the most desirable. If, at the close of the war, men are to return to the heavy tasks of the field and factory, they will return there, and the women will go back to domestic duties—just as necessary a part in the great scheme of production.

To take the Peck theory first, it might be asked whether the old idea of man being able to take a position by sheer strength is any longer tenable.

In the first place, the moral disapproval of the community at brute force and mob violence having any domination in the conduct of affairs is so great that it would seem that this alone precluded the idea that this theory could be correct. There is not a single case from the brutal outbreaks of Tammany in New York to the hideous attempts of syndicalists and the like that has not resulted in the mob idea being overthrown. The gang idea still persists, of course.

Women Becoming Stronger.

BUT there is another, and perhaps more potent aspect of the question of brute force. The physical strength of the male is no longer such that he can confidently boast of being able to wrest matters from the female. Formerly, when work was divided on a physical basis, the man possibly was a hundred per cent stronger than the average woman. That was when outdoor work was the man's and household duties the woman's.

That women have successfully replaced men at almost every occupation in the industrial world is incontrovertible. Papers from Berlin and other cities of the Continent tend to show that the Socialist and Labor parties of practically all countries agree that women should be allowed to enter the labor market on an equal ground with men.

At present, in all the warring nations, women are employed in the ammunition factories. Not

IN THE MAKING



BELGIAN WOMEN as MINE WORKERS



GERMAN WOMEN DOING MEN'S WORK in ORCHARD.

Posed by
LOUISE
MACDONALD,
of the Park
Opera Co.

daily labor, the stress of war conditions is hard. The long hours in the factories are likely to impair women's generic functions and weaken the race.

"There should be a movement in the warring nations to conserve the workers of all kinds," she said, "and to prevent the women of the race from suffering the fatal exhaustion which is bound to ensue when they are compelled to work at the long hours that is customary for the men. Overstrain on the women is not only likely to prove a great disaster to the individual, but it is also likely to prove a great strain upon the race."

"The work that the men can do in the factories of England in turning out ammunition, of the work that the women can do in taking their places is absolutely no criterion of what women should do in the actual affairs of everyday life. Women are giving up their lives at present to do their duty just as surely as the men are sacrificing theirs in the trenches. And moreover, the women are also minimizing the prospects of a future race. There should be a conservation of workers. This is absolutely essential for every nation that expects to exist."

"Protective measures are necessary for the mothers of the race in a condition such as this—and standards should be kept higher and higher with succeeding generations. Over fatigue and overwork will neutralize many of our modern laws of sanitation. Because women work in the factories of Europe at present is no reason why they should be worked in similar fashion here."

"There is such a thing as a nation clothing itself in false security if it believes it can depend upon its women to do the same work as men simply because an emergency arises. Women have their own type of work and men have theirs. But I know that no woman is going to flinch from her duty when she realizes that the occasion has arisen. When the woman thus offers herself as a worker in the ammunition factories it should not be considered that this is her normal work. It should be remembered that she is doing this kind of labor under exceptional circumstances and that she is doing it because of war."

Fatal Drain Predicted.

MRS. H. C. JANUARY of Ferguson, Mo., who has always been prominent in work for her sex, thinks that the continual work-ammunition factories will cause a fatal drain on the race. She says that men can stand the strain and stress of a war better than women because man's labor is more definite—whether it is going into the trenches or digging ditches, the men are more naturally equipped for that mode of life, even if they have had the proverbial white collar jobs prior to that time. The clerk who has soft hands can harden them very easily when he is called to war—or, rather, he can harden them at the orders of a sergeant who will stand over him and see that he does his "turn." But for the woman who is taken from the regular rounds of her

only do they do work that requires fine touch and alertness, such as handling the primers and weighing out the minute loads of powder that constitute certain portions of shells, but they have also proved their value in handling the really heavy products. The 6-inch shells, which the English guns utilize, weigh about 100 pounds apiece, and are being made entirely by women in some of the factories.

An English Cartoon.

WHEN the war first started there was a cartoon in one of the English papers that has been widely copied, and only recently appeared under a modified form, thereby showing that it appealed to the English sense of humor. The cartoon showed an English housemaid notifying her mistress that she was about to leave, add-

ing that she had been employed in an ammunition factory. To this her mistress replied, drily, that if the maid dropped as many things as she had been in the habit of doing about the house, her term of employment was likely to be short.

So this brings us to the third proposition—whether the constant changes in civilization are not simply the adaptation of the sexes to the work for which they are best suited. History shows that certain nations have raised Amazon regiments in which women did their part of the fighting with the men.

Several historians who have tried to analyze this condition have thought that possibly in the wars which characterized the early history of every race, some tribe may have had most of the men exterminated, thus forcing the women into the ranks for the protection of their homes and their offspring. Several African tribes are

known to have developed Amazons, and in Greek mythology Theseus, a national hero of Greece, thought it nothing extraordinary to have made a campaign against the Amazons, and his exploits were recounted proudly in legend.

In as much as legendary history has been borne out pretty well in the case of Greece, for the tomb of Clytemnestra has been found and the site of the ancient City of Troy has been discovered under ruins of other cities, it would seem that there is distinct authenticity in the Amazon story. But in Greece, as in other countries, when conditions changed and the supply of men that had been lost in the constant warfare was renewed, the women fell naturally into one line of work, chiefly household duties, and the men adopted the pursuits best fitted to them.